

N^o 14 Friday, January 20.

*Verum ita Riformes, ita commendare dicaces
Conveniet Satyros, ita vertere seria ludo;
Ne, quicumque Deus, quicumque abbebitur Heros,
Regali conspectus in auro nuper Et ostro,
Migret in obscuras humili sermone Tabernas.* Hor.



Man, who has lived but half as long in the World as I have done, cannot avoid having a great many melancholy Reflections, on seeing Things of the most *serious* and *solemn* Nature turned into *Ridicule*. This Method of Writing was first introduced by *Cervantes* in *Spain*, and *Rabelais* in *France*; from whence it was brought into *England* by King *Charles II.* at his Restoration; where it immediately grew into Credit from that Antipathy, which the People had conceived against the fanatical Purity and Starchness of the former Reign. Ever since that Time it has continued to encrease amongst us, and is now grown to such an Excess, that the gravest Subjects are frequently treated in this light and ludicrous Manner; of which I could give a Multitude of Instances; but I believe it will be sufficient to mention only two Books lately publish'd; namely, *Captain Gulliver's Voyages*, and *An Enquiry into the Reasons of the Conduct of Great-Britain, &c.* the last of which seems to be a servile Imitation of the other, as That is of the *French* or *Spanish* Author before-mention'd, and might be better entitled *Don Quixote in Politicks*; the Reflections of *Pantagruel* on the present State of Affairs; or, *Gulliver turn'd Statesman*.

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It is evident to every Reader of the meanest Capacity, that the Author of this curious Piece proceeds on the Model of those Writers, and that his Design is to ridicule *Statesmen* and *political Matters* in the same Manner that *Cervantes* exposes Books of *Chivalry*, or Captain *Gulliver* the Writings of *Travellers*, by publishing a Collection of the most palpable *Falshoods*, *Absurdities*, and *Contradictions*, in a grave and serious Manner, with the same solemn Grimace and repeated Professions of *Truth* and *Simplicity*.

But I must observe, that this *Mock-Enquirer* is not only guilty of very unseasonable and indecent Mirth, by turning to Jest Things of the highest Concern, but is also somewhat unhappy in his Imitation of those great Masters; for tho' the Account which he gives of publick Affairs is full as *romantick* and *incredible* as the *Adventures*, which They relate; yet he falls infinitely below them in Diction and manner of Writing; which in Them is elegant and majestick; whereas in this Author the Stile is manifestly as *indigested* and *ungrammatical*, as the Tenour of his Book is *fabulous* and *improbable*; but perhaps This may be done on purpose, in order to make the *Banter* the stronger.

Indeed we may, in some Measure, impute this Humour, of turning serious Things into ridicule, to some of our late theatrical Entertainments; for I cannot help thinking that the great Encouragement, which has been given, for some Years past, to the wonderful Conceits of *Scaramauch* and *Harlequin*, has embolden'd several Persons, and especially this Author, to represent the great Affairs of Princes and Kingdoms in the same *jocose* and *farcical* Manner.

What Success this Piece may meet with in an Age and Nation, which is too apt to be pleased with such fanciful Productions, I know not; but it cannot be expected that a Man of my Years should approve of it, in any Degree; for, on the contrary, I am astonished that any Person should presume to publish such *political*.

litical Drollery, and make the most important Affairs of *Europe*, which seems to be just on the Brink of a bloody and expensive War, the Subject of *publick Mirth and Entertainment*.

It is not improbable that some Person, who has more Leisure, or a better Opinion of this Piece than I have, may think it worth his while to examine the *Tendency* of it in a serious Manner. For my Part, I think it deserves only *Contempt* and *Ridicule*; and I can make no doubt that every impartial Man in *Great Britain* will look on it in the same Light; but as it is not my Custom to condemn any Book, however *false* or *absurd*, without some Reason, I think it proper to make the following Observations on this Treatise.

The Author seems impatient to let us into his Design; which I think sufficiently explains itself in the very first Page, where he tells us, “that *Curiosity* itself, the lowest Principle of all our *Enquiries*, will force its way into such a Scene, and will expect or invent some Account of so surprising a *Change*, from a *Calm* hardly paralleled by any past *Prospect*.”

For my Part, I never esteemed the natural *Curiosity* of Mankind to be so low a Principle, as is here represented; but I can easily believe that this Author is actuated by some *higher* Principle, as he seems to intimate himself just below; where he says, that this Principle grows *stronger*, when it is join'd to *Self-interest*, and becomes a *personal* and *national Concern*; which I take to be the Case of the *Enquirer*, whatever it may be of the *Enquiry*; for I readily understand how this Affair may be a *personal Concern* to the Author; and I think it ought to become a *national Concern* to defeat his End.—But to proceed.

A *Parallel* to a *Calm* is manifestly a Solæcism in Language; and a *PAST Prospect* is just as proper as a *FUTURE Retrospect*; both which are what we usually call *Absurdities*; but as *Questions* go farther in convincing some Persons than the strongest *Arguments*, I
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must beg leave to enquire of this *Enquirer* how he thinks any Prelate would like the *PAST prospect* of a *better BISHOPRICK*.

As to the Duke *de Ripperda*, if what is said of him be true, I am heartily glad that he is out of Power; and secured in the Castle of *Segovia*; tho' I presume it will be thought somewhat incredible that a Man, who has discovered such a *rank, personal Malignancy* against his Majesty, should have the Confidence to fly for Refuge, when in Disgrace, to his Majesty's Ambassador, or to think that *Great Britain* would endanger a Rupture with the Kingdom of *Spain*, only to protect such an *inveterate Enemy* from their *Re-sentment*.

In Page 33, we find *Suspitions*, or something stronger than *Suspitions*, built upon *Appearances* of another *Suspicion*; which several *Suspitions*, to the Number of about *seven or eight*, are at length made to amount to a *Certainty*.

Indeed, we are told that *Ripperda* did, upon a certain Occasion, declare in Conversation a *secret, offensive Treaty*; which ought to be look'd on as a *private Proclamation* of a *secret Treaty*.

Having thus settled it as a *Certainty* that there is a *declared, secret, offensive Alliance* between the Emperor and the King of *Spain*, he proposes, in the next Place, to give us some Light into the *Nature* of it, and tells us, that when he has done This—*Let them that be blind, be blind still*; which Expression is look'd upon, by some of his Friends, as a little too *open*, by discovering the little Use, which his Book will be of, unless his Readers resolve to continue *blind still*.

But above all, commend me to those two quick-scented *Custom-House Officers* in *Ireland*; who, upon searching *three Russian Ships*, driven in thither by Strefs of Weather, found all the *Symptoms of Enmity* to his Majesty. I would humbly recommend these
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Gentlemen to better Employments; since They may be of great Use to any *Ministers*, by their excellent Talent at discovering Ships that are *disaffected*, and finding out all the *Symptoms of Enmity* in Vessels, that have false Bottoms. This puts me in mind of a Piece of an old Ballad, which celebrates the same useful Quality in that renowned Prince King *James I.*

*For louder and louder,
Quoth the King I smell Powder,
And down he went into the Cellar;
And the King was an excellent Smeller.*

In the same Page we are told, concerning these *three Ships*, "that when they were safe in *Spain*, it was given out by one of the greatest Men in the Court of *Russia*, and written by another great Man from his Mouth to another at *Stockholm*, in order to influence the *Swedes*, &c" which puts me in mind of another Scrap of Poetry in the *Turtle and Sparrow*, to the same Purpose.

*Sometimes, forsooth, upon the Brook,
I kept a Miss. An honest Rook
Told it a Snipe; who told a Stear;
Who told it Those, who told it her.*

I am surprized that this Author should complain (as he does in more than one Place) of the *extravagant Manner*, in which the Duke de *Ripperda* was honour'd and aggrandized by the King of *Spain*; because I had always such a Respect for Men in high Stations, that I thought a *prime Minister*, who served his Master honestly, however he might behave towards *foreign Courts*, could not be loaded with Honours and Riches, and Grandeur in too *extravagant a Manner*.

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In another Place, speaking of the same great Man, he says, *Who can we believe, if not a prime Minister?* Which, applied to Men of such Eminence, ought certainly to hold true; but as it relates to *One*, of whom this Author has given such an infamous Character, it seems not altogether conclusive; for we may reasonably expect as much *Veracity* in a private Country Gentleman, as in *such a prime Minister*.

I shall take no Notice of his pleasant Argument for paying our Debts, by plunging farther in Debt; because this Method of Reasoning has been advanced before, in another Book, written in the same Spirit, and requires no farther Observations, than what have been already made upon it.

But I cannot neglect to observe, with how much Ease and Dexterity he has made *Don Carlos* the greatest Prince upon Earth; who, by marrying the eldest *Arch-Duchess*, may possibly come to be *Emperor*; may be King of *France*; and may be King of *Spain*; which is somewhat like a *Welch Lady* of my Acquaintance, who, if an Uncle, three Brothers, and two Cousins happen to die, may be a considerable Fortune.

I make no Doubt that the *Pretender*, according to Custom, is very active at this critical Conjunction, and will set all Measures on Foot, which he thinks will facilitate his Designs; but I am sorry to see this Affair treated in so *ludicrous* a Manner by the Author of the *Enquiry*; for, by founding it on a Number of *Suppositions* and *Conjectures*, he makes it look like *Scrub's Plot* in the *Stratagem*, who concludes *thirdly and lastly, it must be a Plot, because I don't know what to make of it.*

D. C.



Monday,